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SUBJECT: UN OFFICE OF INTERNAL OVERSIGHT SERVICES FIELD
INVESTIGATORS

REF: USUN/IO E-MAILS OF 2/29/08 AND PREVIOUS

1. (U) This is an action request (paragraph 5). As USUN is aware, Rep. Chris Smith (R-New Jersey) visited the Democratic Republic of Congo in January. During that visit he learned that the UN Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) had decided to move field investigators from UN peacekeeping missions in Africa to regional hubs. OIOS investigators assigned to the UN peacekeeping operation in Congo (MONUC)'s office in Goma told him that they believed that this decision would hamper their ongoing efforts to deter and investigate allegations of misconduct, in particular allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) by UN peacekeepers. Mr. Smith was a principal author of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act, and has a continuing interest in this issue. USUN followed up with OIOS which reported that, given a shortage of investigators and the difficulties of traveling between countries in Africa, they had determined that it would be faster and more efficient to deploy investigators from regional hubs. OIOS did not agree that assignment of investigators to missions has a significant deterrent effect, stating that there is little regular interaction between mission personnel and investigators except in the course of a specific investigation.

2. (U) During the House Foreign Affairs Committee's April 2 hearing on UN peacekeeping operations, Mr. Smith again raised his concerns with IO Assistant Secretary Silverberg. Specifically, he stressed that he was particularly concerned about the effects of the withdrawal of investigators from Goma, given the persistence of allegations that MONUC personnel were committing abuses. In addition, he reported that OIOS investigators had stated that MONUC troops and commanders did not take the UN zero tolerance policy seriously. Mr. Smith also asked for additional information on pre-deployment training on SEA and disciplinary action taken against offenders, across the board. He commented that his conversations with the AU as well as with troop contributors and trainers has led him to believe that, although intentions may be good, training is in fact insufficient and there is very little disciplinary follow-up by troop contributors when allegations of misconduct are substantiated.

3. (U) Assistant Secretary Silverberg told Mr. Smith that she thought that, in some cases, regional hubs could be effective in making the best use of scarce staff and budget. In addition, however, she agreed emphatically with Mr. Smith that there were particular reasons for concern with respect to MONUC and that we would continue to press the UN to reconsider its approach on the issue. Ms. Silverberg also

stressed the Department's continuing efforts to press for substantive training and disciplinary actions by troop contributors for their national contingents.

¶4. (SBU) During his April 16 visit to the Department of State, SRSG for the DRC Alan Doss (protect) reported to IO/PSC Director Wake that he told the Secretariat he was very opposed to the removal of the OIOS investigators, calling the decision "appalling." He said he had made this statement publicly; the Department has not yet found a reference.

¶5. USUN is requested to again underline to OIOS the U.S. view that in addition to placing investigators in regional UN hubs, it continues to be necessary to "embed" them in UN operations where there have been repeated reports of sexual exploitation and abuse by UN personnel. If all OIOS investigators are based in regional hubs, this could significantly delay investigation of reports of SEA and impede or prevent the timely collection of forensic evidence.

In particular, we believe that assignment of field investigators to MONUC is essential. You should reiterate our view that the UN Secretariat and individual troop-contributing countries should enhance training, and underline that we regret that we continue to hear reports that field commanders are not taking the "zero tolerance" policy seriously.

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